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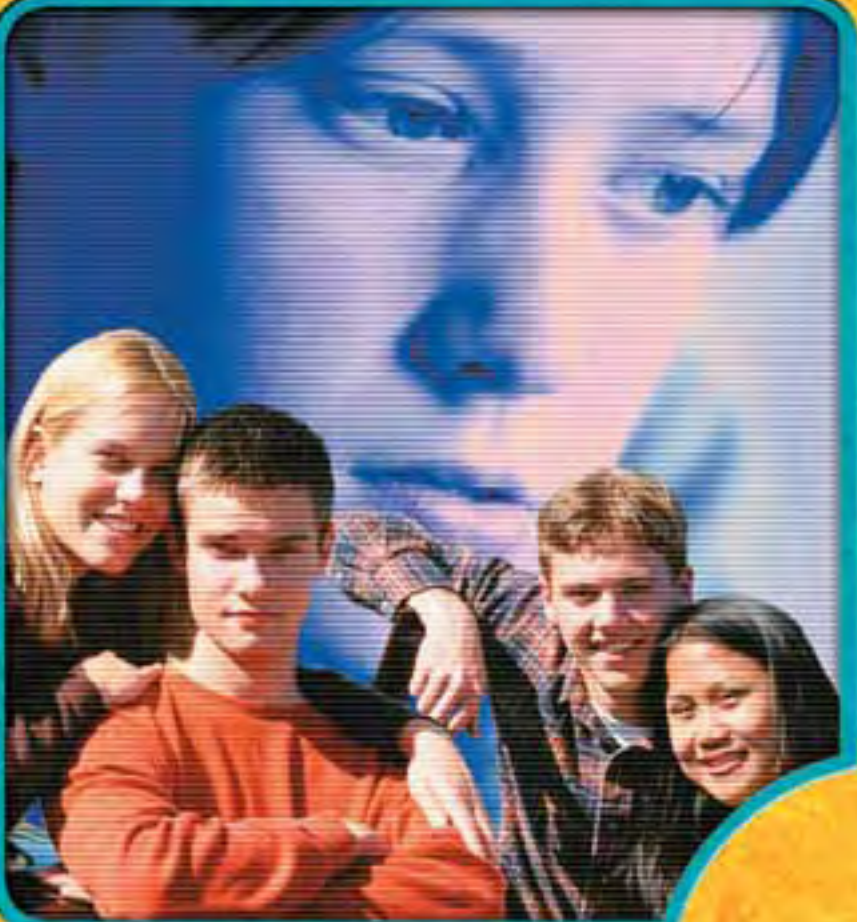
IT CAN ONLY GET BETTER

(What connection do you think the following illustration has with the Bible texts on the other page?)

Jim is a good guy. In fact, everyone thinks that Jim has it all figured out. He leads out in singing at church, he gets good grades, and everyone seems to really like him. You can often see Jim running errands for teachers or making sure that no one is left out of a game on the playing field. Jim is one of those people that seem to know the secret to happiness. He is never down or depressed. He always has a smile on his face for anyone who needs it. He continually tries to be better and better in his life. In fact, some have even said that it seems as if Jim is perfect. When you look around his life, you can't seem to see anything that Jim does wrong. He is not even late to class unless he is helping out someone else.

However, what no one knows about Jim is that he is scared. He is incredibly scared that he has not done enough to be saved by Jesus Christ. Jim feels as if making a mistake might keep him out of heaven. Everything that Jim does is in order to gain favor from God. He thinks that if he can do enough good things then God has to save him.

Poor Jim, he doesn't understand one very important thing. We are saved through the grace of Jesus Christ alone, and all those good things we do are done because Jesus first saved us. They are always a response to the grace that has been given to us. Jim does all these great and wonderful things, but he is truly scared inside because he is not sure that he has done enough to be saved. What a scary way to live!



Key Text: Choose one of the texts from Wednesday's portion of the lesson. Write it here and memorize it this week.

>>

Sunday

HERE'S WHAT I THINK

>> Johnny has a bad habit. It seems as if no matter what he does, he keeps falling into the same thing again and again. He has asked God for victory, but he can't seem to stop what he is doing. His problem is that he keeps going back to some places that he shouldn't when he is searching the Internet. He knows that he shouldn't go there, but he has done it so much, it seems as if he can't stop.

1. What do you think Johnny should do?
2. What is the difference between asking for God's help and becoming obedient to His will?
3. How can Johnny use his community to help him with such a problem?

>> Log on to www.guidemagazine.org/rtf to post your responses. Be up-front and honest. Say what you think.

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Monday

WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO SAY?

Different people, different opinions. Some of the quotations below represent the views of true kingdom citizens; others may not. Can you tell the difference? How do these statements compare with what God is saying in His Word? After reviewing the texts in the God Says . . . portion of the lesson, write a statement that captures your belief. Be prepared to quote yourself at Sabbath School.

>> "Holiness is the architectural plan upon which God buildeth up His living temple."—*Charles Haddon Spurgeon, 19th-century popular English preacher and author.*

>> "When all is done, there is no such error or heresy, nothing so fundamentally opposed to religion, as a wicked life."—*John Tillotson, 17th-century English prelate, archbishop of Canterbury.*

>> "All sin comes from not putting supreme value on the glory of God—this is the very essence of sin."—*John Piper, current U.S. preacher, author.*

>> "Nothing whatever pertaining to godliness and real holiness can be accomplished without grace."—*Saint Augustine (354-430), Christian church father.*

>> "I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies, for the hardest victory is over self."—*Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Greek philosopher.*

>> "In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves . . . self-discipline with all of them came first."—*Harry S. Truman (1884-1972), 33rd U.S. President.*

>> "There ain't no sin and there ain't no virtue. There's just stuff people do. It's all part of the same thing. And some of the things folks do is nice, and some ain't nice, but that's as far as any man got a right to say."—*John Ernst Steinbeck, 20th-century U.S. writer.*

Write your own quotation.

What I say is . . .

>>

3

Tuesday
SO WHAT?

- >> Why is holiness important? It is a mandate from God (see **Hebrews 12:14**). However, don't be confused. We still have sinful natures. We know that total perfection is received only through the grace of Jesus Christ and at the Second Coming. But what we have been called to be is obedient to Christ and His will for us in every way that He reveals it. This obedience always includes a desire not to sin and hurt our best Friend, and to overcome temptation through the power of His grace.
- >> As we seek what the Lord wants for us, we continue to grow in His grace. We are never more saved than we were when we accepted Him, but we can continue to grow in our actions and in our responses to His will. This becomes a more powerful desire in us the more we seek the heart of God. While we leave the work of perfecting us up to God, we concentrate on an ever closer walk with Him, and a better understanding of His grace.
- >> As well, God has said He wants to give us life more abundantly. That is a life without the regrets that come from living our own way instead of His way. We want to be Christians who are walking in the light of God and looking at our past with happiness, not with regret. Obedience to God helps us with that. It really is the only insurance of a great life.

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Thursday
WHAT DOES THIS
HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

- >> EVERYTHING! You are the one who makes the choices in your life. You have the power to follow the will of God or to choose not to. You have the power to move in a godly direction or a sinful direction. God is waiting for you to ask for His help, and to give it to you in abundance (a lot!!).
- >> So the question becomes, What are you going to do with this knowledge? Are you going to continue in your pursuit of holiness, or are you going to let it go? It has everything to do with you because you decide how you are going to live your life. Continue on in making good decisions, and be encouraged that we all fight the same fight.

Friday
HOW DOES IT WORK?

- >> The 21-day Challenge
 1. I would like to be obedient to God's will in my life when it comes to: (list temptation you want God to help you overcome)

 2. I find myself engaging in this activity, or thinking these thoughts when I am:

☐ Alone ☐ With my friends ☐ With my family ☐ Other
 3. I have friends who would be interested in being accountability partners with me.
Yes _____ No _____
 4. I will commit the next 3 weeks (21 days) to overcoming one bad habit I have.
- Signed _____ Date _____

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Wednesday
GOD SAYS . . .

- >> **Exodus 15:11 (NIV)**
"Who among the gods is like you, O Lord ? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?"
- >> **Isaiah 35:8 (NIV)**
"And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it."
- >> **Romans 6:19 (NIV)**
"I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness."
- >> **Ephesians 4:24 (NIV)**
"And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."
- >> **Philippians 4:8 (NIV)**
"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."
- >> **Hebrews 12:14 (NIV)**
"Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."

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- >> Here are some words of encouragement that God has already spoken to help you through the next 21 days:

Philippians 4:13 (NIV)—I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Romans 15:15 (NIV)—I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me.

2 Corinthians 1:6 (NIV)—If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)—Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Colossians 4:2 (NIV)—Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Philemon 20 (NIV)—I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.